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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS MINISTER DEFLECTS PRESSURE TO BACK
MOI INTELLIGENCE OFFICIAL'S RELEASE, DISCUSSES KARBALA
VIOLENCE

REF: A. BAGHDAD 2854
[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 2579
[1](#)C. BAGHDAD 1378

Classified By: ACTING POLITICAL COUNSELOR ELLEN GERMAIN FOR REASONS 1.4
(B,D).

[1](#)1. (S/NF) SUMMARY: Minister of Human Rights Wijdan Salim told PolOff October 28 she has deflected multiple requests by Iranian-linked officials to guarantee the release of Ministry of Interior (MoI) Colonel (COL) Thamir Mohammad (Isma'il) Sinah Al-Husayni, in Coalition custody since his arrest on September 20 for involvement in illegal militia activities. Elaborating on requests from Shi'a groups, she noted that Sadrists asked her to investigate torture and killings in Karbala associated with intra-Shi'a violence. Minister Wijdan also said that by the request of Brigadier General Qasim Atta, the Iraqi government's spokesperson for the Baghdad Security Plan (BSP), she would soon visit Baghdad detention facilities and address the media afterwards. Noting she would respect detainees' privacy, she criticized the publicity Sunni Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi generated during his recent visits to Baghdad detention facilities as contrary to human rights. END SUMMARY.

MOHR ASKED TO BACK MOI INTELLIGENCE OFFICIAL'S RELEASE

[1](#)2. (S/NF) Human Rights Minister Wijdan Salim said October 28 that Iranian-linked officials, whom she declined to name, have pressured her multiple times to guarantee the release of MoI intelligence officer COL Thamir Mohammad (Isma'il) Sinah Al-Husayni, whom Coalition Forces arrested on September 20 for his alleged involvement in illegal militia activities and torture of detainees. The unnamed officials, Minister Wijdan said, believe because she is on good terms with the Americans, she can therefore guarantee Thamir's release. The Minister said she has deflected their requests by explaining many times that under the Coalition's Judicial Pledge program, guarantors cannot help facilitate releases, unless the Coalition has actually approved the releases in the first place (ref A).

[1](#)3. (S/NF) In a separate conversation with PolOff on October 14, Council of Representatives (CoR) Human Rights Committee Deputy Harith al-Ubaidy provided background on COL Thamir gleaned from his conversations with Thamir during his July 26 visit to the MoI Second National Police detention facility at Khadimiya (ref B). According to al-Ubaidy, COL Thamir -- then one of the detention facility's commanders -- told him he was a Badr Corps member during his fifteen years in Iran and defended the use of torture. Al-Ubaidy also said that

prior to COL Thamir's arrest American investigators had approached him for information on Thamir's role in torturing detainees.

SADRISTS ASK MOHR TO INVESTIGATE KARBALA VIOLENCE

14. (S) Minister Wijdan also reported that Sadrists have asked her ministry to investigate the alleged detention and torture of Sadrists in Karbala by Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) affiliated groups and killings by Dawa-affiliated security forces. She said that a Karbala-based Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) investigative team was putting together a report on the intra-Shi'a violence in Karbala -- including an alleged case in which Dawa-affiliated security forces used threats and a 25 million dinar bribe (approximately 20,000 USD) to buy a man's silence on their killings. (Note: Following the street-fighting that broke out in Karbala on August 28, the Iraqi government formed a committee led by parliamentarian Mithal Alousi (Iraqi Umma Party) to investigate the violence. Alousi had told the press in early October that preliminary investigations indicated that the Jaysh al-Mahdi Sadrism-affiliated militia bore greater responsibility than other Shi'a factions. End note.)

MOHR CRITICIZES HASHIMI'S DETENTION CENTER PUBLICITY

15. (C) Turning to detention facilities, Minister Wijdan criticized VP Hashimi's filming of female and juvenile detainees during his recent visits to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Khadimiya Women's Prison and the Ministry of Labor and

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Social Affairs Topchi Juvenile Rehabilitation School on October 6 and September 25, respectively. She asserted the broadcasting of detainees' images on television violated their human rights. Minister Wijan said that per BSP spokesperson Brigadier General Qassim Atta's request, she would soon visit the MoI's Khadimiya Second National Police (NP) Detention Facility at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Justice and the MoJ's Rusafa detention facility and comment to the media about their conditions after exiting the facilities. She explained she did not want to violate the privacy of detainees and their families. The Minister assessed that Atta was probably interested in demonstrating improved detention conditions such as the reduction in overcrowding at the MoI Second NP detention facility at Khadimiya after new cells were constructed (ref C). However, she noted that allegations of torture in Iraqi detention facilities persist.

COMMENT

16. (S) Direct pressure on the Human Rights Minister to guarantee the release of an accused torture perpetrator is a disturbing and unprecedented development. The Sadrists' request for a Human Rights Ministry investigation of the Karbala violence could be related to their possible dissatisfaction with the initial findings the investigation led by Mithal Alousi, which suggests that Jaysh Al-Mahdi instigated the violence in Karbala. END COMMENT.
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